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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2672

July 29, 1994

NEW ADMINISTRATORS FOR FSIS AND FAS -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced the appointments of Michael R. Taylor to head the Food Safety and Inspection Service and August Schumacher Jr. to head the Foreign Agricultural Service. Taylor comes to USDA from his current position as deputy commissioner for policy at the Food and Drug Administration. In addition, Taylor has worked as a private attorney specializing in food and drug law, and in the late 1970s, he was executive assistant to the Commissioner and in the general counsel's office at FDA. Schumacher joins USDA from the agriculture group at The World Bank. He also served as commissioner of Food and Agriculture for Massachusetts from 1985-90. Taylor and Schumacher will begin their USDA jobs on August 15. **Contact:** Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.

SAFE FOOD HANDLING STRESSED FOR TWO STATES -- USDA has stressed safe handling and cooking for raw meat and poultry in New Jersey and Ohio where outbreaks of foodborne illnesses linked to E.coli 0157:H7 bacterium are being reported. USDA is working with state health departments and urging that consumers follow safe handling instructions that now appear on all raw meat and poultry packages. Consumers wishing additional information can call the **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-800-535-4555**. **Contact:** Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.

STEPS TO IMPROVE FOREIGN FOOD AID -- Grant Buntrock, Administrator of USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service has announced that USDA is working with private industry officials to better protect the quality of commodities provided under U.S. foreign food assistance programs. The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will test a new vessel-loading observation procedure in August. This procedure will minimize the amount of damaged bags and commodities loaded on vessels and enhance the appearance of U.S. agricultural commodities delivered overseas. Also, there will be more inspections by the Federal Grain Inspection Service at millpoints to ensure that only damage-free commodities are delivered to U.S. ports for export. **Contact:** Robert Feist (202) 720-6789.

FIRE ANT TREATMENT -- USDA has proposed to amend its imported fire ant quarantine by adding tefluthrin to the list of authorized chemicals for the treatment of containerized nursery stock moving from quarantined areas. Eleven southeastern states and Puerto Rico are quarantined for imported fire ant. The quarantine regulations are designed to prevent the spread of the fire ants on articles moving out of the infested area. **Contact:** Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.

AFRICANIZED HONEYBEES IN PUERTO RICO -- USDA has identified three swarms of honeybees in Puerto Rico as Africanized. Additional swarm traps are being set to determine if the bees are established in Puerto Rico. Africanized honeybees were recently detected on July 1 near San Juan. Africanized honeybees are currently established in southern Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. **Contact:** Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.

MARKETING AND INSPECTION FORUMS -- USDA will hold two public marketing and inspection forums during August to receive recommendations on food safety and quality policy issues relative to the 1995 Farm Bill. The forums are scheduled for August 3, in Chicago, IL and August 19 in Philadelphia, PA. **Patricia Jensen**, Acting Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Inspection Services, said these forums will provide valuable insight and input on food safety and quality issues and help prepare for the 1995 Farm Bill debate. **Contact: Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.**

AUGUST CROP SURVEYS TO BE EXPANDED -- August crop survey samples will be expanded in the flooded areas of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service announced that several new questions will be incorporated covering all crops affected to help determine losses from floods and torrential rains. Survey results will be included in the Crop Production report scheduled for release August 11 at 8:30 a.m. EDT. The report will provide estimates of acreage for harvest, yield, and production for corn, cotton, soybeans, tobacco, peanuts, sorghum and hay. **Contact: Ray Halley (202) 720-3843.**

IMPORTED MEXICAN CATTLE RESTRICTED -- USDA has reopened the comment period for proposed requirements on certain Mexican steers and spayed heifers. Cattle imported from Mexico that are not being shipped immediately to slaughter would be defined as "restricted status cattle." Under the proposed rule, the cattle must be imported to a quarantined feedlot or pasture or be held at a quarantined holding facility for a 60-day post-entry tuberculin test. The comment period was reopened at commenters' request on July 18 for 60 days. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.**

TUBERCULOSIS-FREE STATUS -- USDA has raised the status of Louisiana to "accredited-free" in the national eradication program for bovine tuberculosis. Currently, 43 states including Louisiana have "accredited-free status." "Accredited-free" status is attained by a state that is free of cases of tuberculosis in cattle or bison for at least five years. **Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.**

SEARCH FOR NEW ORCHID COLORS -- A corn gene gives USDA researchers a jump start in verifying what the color of a new flower will be. **Robert J. Griesbach**, plant geneticist for USDA's Agricultural Research Service, said they have found a corn gene that will give results on the color of new hybrids in just three days. That gene regulates the pigment in corn plants. The genetic technique involves coating the corn DNA on microscopic gold pellets that are propelled by a particle gun into orchid flower petals. This process screens for genetic flaws in the parent plants crossed to breed new hybrids. This genetic screening could result in a broader range of color in orchids and other ornamental plants. Griesbach said the technique could be a boon to breeders of orchids because usually the plant industry now waits three years until a bloom appears. **Contact: Hank Becker (301) 344-2769.**

HONEYBEE IMPORTATION PROPOSAL -- USDA is reopening and extending the comment period for a proposal that would allow honeybees and honeybee semen to be imported from New Zealand to the U.S. nonstop. Comments received on or before Aug. 17 will be considered. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1939 -- Oats was once a big U.S. agricultural enterprise, but now this country is having to import oats in large quantities. John Snyder explores what's happening with this important food and feed crop. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1420 -- E.coli outbreaks prompt warnings; details on how to safely grill burgers; never too late to lift weight; volunteers more important than ever; beef bargains this summer. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1930 -- A new project to improve quality of food aid shipments; new rice outlook; pesticide reform may not happen this year; major broiler expansion; small scale agriculture is also diverse agriculture. (Weekly cassette -- news features.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE. These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Tuesday, August 8, crop/weather update; Thursday, August 11, U.S. crop report and world supply and demand (we will change our line at 10:30 a.m. to include these reports and again at 3:00 p.m. for cotton and citrus information); Friday, August 12, world grain/crop production, world oilseed, world cotton, U.S. cattle outlook; Monday, August 15, feed update; Tuesday, August 16, farm labor, milk production, crop/weather update.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES: **Lynn Wyvill** has two reports on Georgia flooding. First story is about a USDA Soil Conservation Service pond design that withstood the flood. The second story relates SCS' efforts to cleanup the waterway at Montezuma, GA. **Pat O'Leary** reports on USDA's "Youth Enterprise in Agriculture" which gives city kids a farm experience for the summer.

ACTUALITIES: USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** describes the latest weather and crop conditions.

UPCOMING FEATURES: **Pat O'Leary** reports on the upcoming 50th birthday of Smokey Bear and on USDA Forest Service's summer youth camp. **Lynn Wyvill** reports on the National Agricultural Library's program to ship surplus books and journals to Central Europe and on food safety tips for sending children of any age back to school.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

*Galaxy 7, Transponder 9, Channel 9, Audio 6.2 or 6.8, Downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.
Available on Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., EDT; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., EDT.*

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.
Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

OFF MIKE

WELCOME CALL...from Jerry Lyons (WVSC, Somerset, PA) who reports using many USDA radio features on his station. Jerry has 20 years' broadcasting experience with a Master's in journalism. He often serves as a Washington, D.C. tourguide for visitors from his state.

CARDS...are welcome to cheer recuperation of farm broadcaster Art Sechrest (WJBC, Bloomington, IL) who recently suffered a stroke and initially was unable to speak. Address cards to: Community Hospital East, Hooks Rehab, 1500 N. Ritter Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219.

NEW TALK SHOW...is on-the-air from 10-11:00 a.m. on Brownfield Network with host **Derry Brownfield** entertaining listeners tuned to 35 affiliates in seven states. **Cindy Zimmerman**, show's assistant producer, called with the news.

ASSISTANT FAIR MANAGER...of the Illinois State Fair is the new title for **Peg Fish** (WCVS/WFMB, Springfield, IL) who goes "off mike" July 29 to assume duties full-time after doing both jobs for a couple of weeks.

ALABAMA PUBLIC TV...staffer, **Mary Gaines**, who until recently worked on their program, "From These Fields," now works as a public affairs specialist for USDA's Forest Service in Montgomery, AL.

SALAD BOWL OF THE WORLD...that's what the call letters of KSBW-TV (Salina, CA) stand for, reminded **Jim Adamson** in a call to our TV team recently. He plans to use our story about a new CD-ROM on gardening from the National Agricultural Library on a computer show that he does once a week, in addition to his ag programming.



LARRY A. QUINN, Chief
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

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